

Purdue University  
**Purdue e-Pubs**

---

Proceedings of the IATUL Conferences

1995 IATUL Proceedings

---

Jun 5th, 12:00 AM

## Presidential address

Gerard A.J.S. van Marle  
*University of Twente*

---

Gerard A.J.S. van Marle, "Presidential address." *Proceedings of the IATUL Conferences*. Paper 3.  
<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/iatul/1995/papers/3>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries.  
Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*Marle, Gerard A.J.S. van*

University of Twente, The Netherlands

---

On behalf of the IATUL Board of Directors, let me start by offering you all a very warm welcome to this 1995 IATUL Conference on "Resources Management".

Forty years ago, to be precise on June 1st in 1955, IATUL was established.

At that time I was still attending the primary school and I had never visited, or even heard of a library.

Until recently, the only facts I knew about the first years of IATUL were via oral communication with other IATUL colleagues. From this information I had understood that IATUL was founded in The Netherlands and for that reason I had been asked, some years ago, to organise this Jubilee Conference in The Netherlands. However, when I wrote to all the ex-Board Members of IATUL, inviting them to join us at the Jubilee Conference dinner, I received a very kind letter from one of the founders and the first Dutch Board Member of IATUL, dr. L.J. van der Wolk, former librarian of the University of Technology in Delft.

In this letter dr. Van der Wolk, much to his regret, wrote that he had decided not to join us on Thursday because of the risk that the evening would be too tiring for him. Together with his best wishes for the conference and best regards to his old IATUL friends, he sent me a copy of the first page of the *IATUL Newsletter* no. 8 of June 1965. Very much to my surprise I discovered a huge difference between the oral information that I had received from my present IATUL colleagues and the printed information that I received from dr. Van der Wolk.

The cover article contained a "Homage to Dr. E. Hemlin on the occasion of IATUL's tenth anniversary". The article started with a short introduction about the beginning of IATUL, and I quote:



"1965 is a landmark in history. Ten years ago IATUL was established. To be precise: the date was June 1, 1955 and the place was Düsseldorf. With his proposals at the Vienna meeting of IFLA in 1953 and an interim report at the meeting of IFLA in Zagreb in 1954 Dr. E. Hemlin laid the foundations for our organization.

In September 1955 IATUL was recognized as a section of IFLA. Dr. Hemlin was not only the founder of IATUL but also IATUL's first President and in this capacity he did much to develop IATUL. He directed IATUL affairs with enthusiasm and energy. To honour Dr. Hemlin for all he has done for IATUL the Board decided to nominate the founder and first president First Honorary Member, on the occasion of IATUL's tenth anniversary. At the meeting of the Board on 25 and 26 March 1965 in Copenhagen the Board sent Dr. Hemlin a telegram informing him of his nomination and Dr. Hemlin gladly accepted".

As you will understand I was, and actually still am, rather confused about the gap between the written and oral information I received. I am sure the written information is correct but I am still wondering how it can be that quite a number of IATUL colleagues are convinced that IATUL was founded in The Netherlands. Perhaps the story refers to the occasion when IATUL became an independent Association and not, as in the beginning, a section of IFLA.

I am sure this conference will reveal the truth since we have a special session on the "History of IATUL" on Thursday, together with the presence of many ex-Board Members.

There are some other IATUL landmarks I want to call to mind.

Exactly thirty years ago the journal *IATUL Proceedings* started publication. It has been published regularly ever since this start in Delft, later at Loughborough University of Technology in the UK, during the years 1968-1973, and from 1974 till 1986 at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden.



From 1987, up to and including 1991, it was published by Oxford University Press under its new title *IATUL Quarterly* and since 1992 it has been published again under its original title *IATUL Proceedings*, however starting as volume 1 New Series.

So during this conference we are celebrating not only the 40th anniversary of IATUL but also the 30th anniversary of *IATUL Proceedings*. The *Proceedings* actually were started by Dr. Van der Wolk; could that be the confusing factor? Wait till Thursday and you will get the proper answer without doubt.

As you can see in the programme I have only allocated 10 minutes for my Presidential Address: the reason for that is twofold.

First we have three outstanding speakers in our next session. It is clear that they should be given enough time to present their papers and that we should have the possibility of some discussion.

Since I know that IATUL is not only a healthy but also thirsty Association, I considered it to be impolite to keep you here too long, risking a dried-up audience almost before the conference has started.

Secondly I am not only having the privilege of being your President, but I happen to be Chairman of the Programme Committee and Chairman of the Organising Committee as well.

Even for me, it was not too difficult to foresee that there would not be much time left to prepare an original and well-documented Presidential Address. So I will be short and finish my address with the main task of it: setting the scene for our Conference. Therefore, let me spend the last few minutes talking about our conference theme, "Resources Management".

When I proposed this theme to the Board of Directors of IATUL I expressly pointed out that the theme should be seen in the broadest possible context. In the past, when librarians discussed "resources management" it was mostly, if not only, referring to information (resources) management.



In the last decade however, we have been confronted with dramatic changes in the ways in which we can collect and distribute information. We all know the phrase "from ownership to access" and although one gets the impression that every librarian agrees that this will be the leading strategic theme for the rest of our century, I quite often get the impression that many colleagues do not realise the broad impact that this theme can or, in my opinion, will have in the near future.

To illustrate my point I would like to share with you some questions that are really on my mind right now and on which I am doing some research in order to obtain evidence, or arguments, for new national information policies.

Please note that I included the term national which does *not* mean that it could be used as a national policy in any country but that it is meant to be on a national level in *The Netherlands*.

It could be useful for other countries if they are comparable with the Dutch library scene of which I dare to say that it has a high performance in the areas of networking, interlibrary loan, and shared cataloguing, *and* indexing. Besides we do have some advanced national projects on electronic document delivery, the PICA Rapdoc project, and we have just started a new project, the PICA Webdoc project, of which Mr. Costers, the Director of PICA, will inform you tomorrow afternoon.

Finally, The Netherlands is a very small country with a good railway system, enabling you to visit any university library in the country and return the very same day.

With these characteristics in mind I am wondering:

1. Should the library staff, given the ever diminishing possibilities of buying books, still be involved in collection development, or should the library divide the budget over the faculty research units and let them select the books they need and then ask the library to purchase them, in doing so hand over our traditional responsibility of collection development?
2. Is national coordination of collection development an anachronism? (given the existence of the online accessible union catalogue, as well as other national databases, in combination with the open library network, and automated interlibrary document ordering systems).



3. Is the exchange of publications (doctoral theses) still worthwhile or is it a waste of time, money and space?

These are only some examples of questions we should ask ourselves. With these examples I hope that I have illustrated my views in the context of what I consider to be resources management: not only information resources management, but also human resources management, space and building resources management, national information infrastructures resources management, performance indicators management, internet resources management, own university's researchers' scientific output management etc.

If you look at our programme you will see that many of these topics are included in the different sessions of the coming week. I do hope that you will get some answers but I also hope that you will go home after this conference with new questions that need to be discussed and solved in the years to come.

Many of these questions, I am sure, will re-appear in our future IATUL Conferences.

Let me finish in expressing my hope that you will all have a very pleasant and rewarding week.

It is my pleasure, as President of IATUL, to declare this conference opened.